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Vancouver metro

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Golden Globes

Big wins for Jennifer Lawrence, Matt Damon, Kate Winslet, Lady Gaga and Sam Smith

metroLIFE

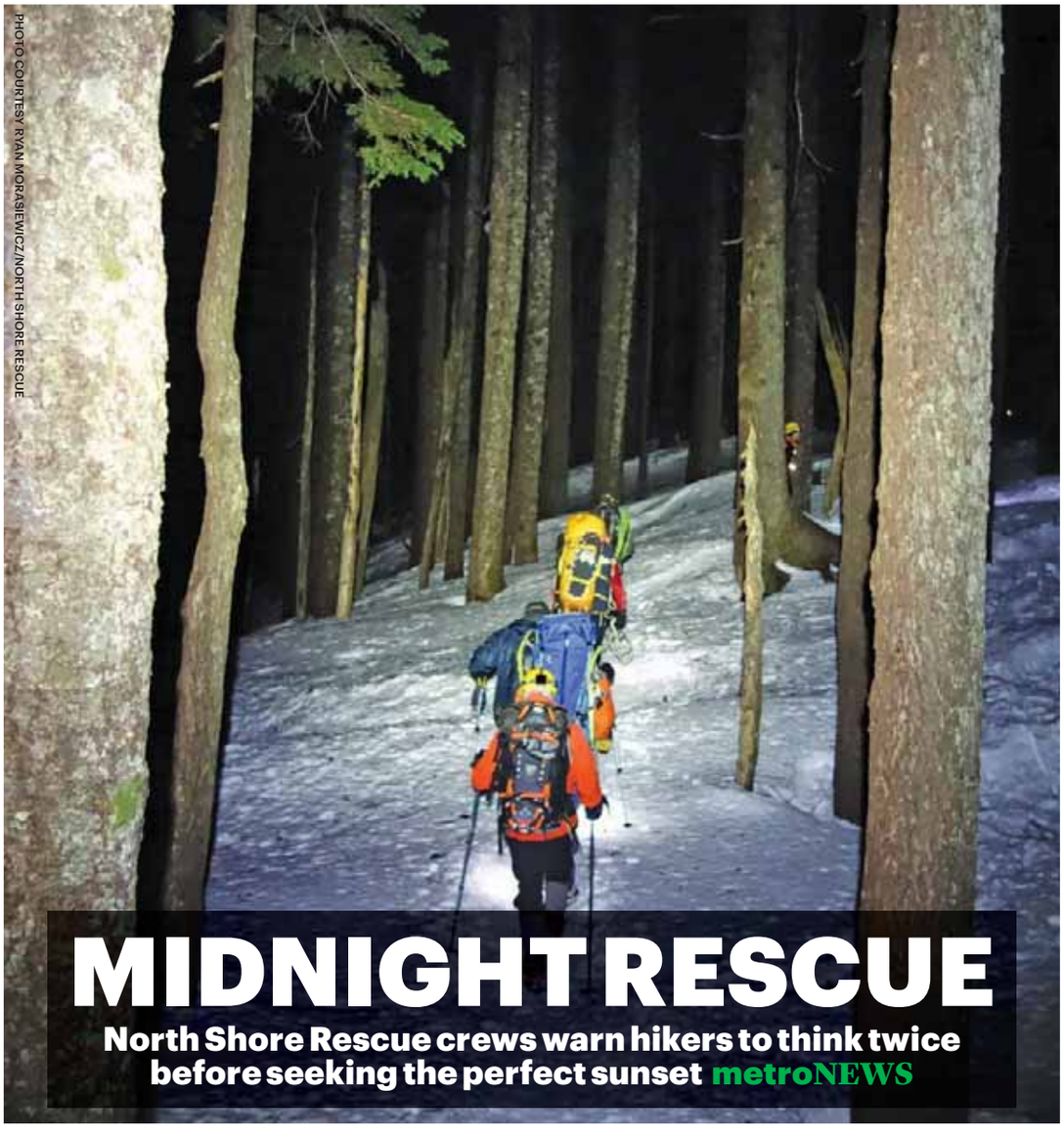

PHOTO COURTESY RYAN MORASIEWICZ/NORTH SHORE RESCUE

MIDNIGHT RESCUE

North Shore Rescue crews warn hikers to think twice before seeking the perfect sunset metroNEWS

Party ends in tragedy

INVESTIGATION

Woman, 23, dies in fall from moving bus

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

A birthday celebration ended tragically when a 23-year-old woman died in a fall from a moving party bus in the heart of downtown Vancouver on Saturday night.

The young woman was inside the bus celebrating with approximately two-dozen party guests when she fell out of an open door as the bus turned left onto Burrard from West Hastings Street at around 9:30 p.m., Vancouver police spokesman Sgt. Randy Fincham said in a statement on Sunday.

The bus struck the woman after she fell, according to police. Paramedics pronounced her dead at the scene.

Police would not confirm which party bus company was involved in the incident, but Fincham said the driver stopped immediately when other passengers alerted him to the fall and is co-operating with the investigation.

The police department's collision investigation unit continues to look into the circumstances that led to the woman's death, although Fincham said it is still early in the investigation. It is not yet clear why the bus door was open.

The death comes almost a year after British Columbia tightened the regulations for party buses and stretch SUVs in February 2015, two years after it promised to crack down on the industry in response to the death of a 16-year-old boy on a party bus in Surrey.

Stretch SUVs and limo buses must now get special authorization licences from the Passenger Transportation Board in order to operate. The change gives the PTB, which has traditionally been stingy with licences, more control over how many vehicles are operating in which jurisdictions. It also forces drivers to be accountable to the independent board, not just demand in the market.

Under the old system, anyone with a general authorization limousine licence could operate any number of vehicles wherever they wanted. Those are much easier to acquire than taxi licences, sparking safety concerns in an industry that caters to nightclub goers. It is illegal to consume liquor in a moving vehicle.

The province announced the regulations at a news conference attended by Julie Raymond, who has been calling for reforms to the industry since her daughter Shannon died in 2008 after using drugs on a party bus.

metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Sean Penn faces criticism over interview with Mexican drug kingpin 'El Chapo.' **World**

It's scary, really, for any activist going up against organizations knowing that police can just throw out these letters ... threatening something as big as five years in jail for walking outside of a store on public property.
Taylor Freeman, anti-fur activist
FUR
The police, out of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of protesters, would not have bothered had there not been something significant to the case that this gentleman is not talking about.
Rokie Bernstein, CEO of Snowflake Furs

Taylor Freeman holds a sign on Thursday before participating in an anti-fur protest outside a clothing store in Vancouver. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Protester says warning 'scary'

POLICE

Company CEO claims activist was aggressive, threatening

An anti-fur activist has complained to British Columbia's police watchdog, claiming Vancouver Police violated his rights by indefinitely banning him from visiting, or even walking past, a store where he regularly protests.

Taylor Freeman's complaint to the Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner claims a warning letter from police infringes on his right to protest and unfairly restricts his travel through downtown Vancouver.

Freeman said he has been protesting weekly outside Snowflake Furs for nearly two years. In November he received a letter advising that if he had any contact with a store employee he would be arrested for criminal harassment, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

He said the constable who issued the letter told him he cannot even walk by the store downtown, near where he lives. Unlike a peace bond, which needs to be renewed by a court, the letter has no time limit.

"It's scary, really, for any activist going up against organizations knowing that police can just throw out these letters ... threatening something as big as five years in jail for walking outside of a store on public property," said Freeman.

But Snowflake Furs CEO Rokie Bernstein and another store owner, who says he's had run-ins with Freeman, say the warning letter is long overdue. Bernstein said Freeman was aggressive, threatening and often hurling obscenities at customers and staff.

The one-page warning letter says a complaint is under investigation, suggesting Freeman is harassing a store employee. It says the employee fears for her safety and finds his unwanted contact at her workplace "annoying and frightening."

Freeman said he never enters the store nor speaks with staff.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

While the two sides tell very different stories, civil liberties advocates say the letter issued to Freeman appears to be overly broad, and raises questions about the ability of police to balance protesters' rights with those of businesses.

Micheal Vonn, policy director at the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, said her organization is not opposed in principle to police warning letters.

"We are not convinced that this particular warning letter was an appropriate one, however — for the reasons, simply put, that it is incredibly vague, incredibly sweeping, and imposes a restraint on a constitutional right."

Vonn said a more appropriate way of addressing these issues would a peace bond, which requires police to present evidence to a judge.

Doug King, a lawyer for the advocacy group Pivot Legal Society, said the letter is a standard one issued in criminal harassment cases, but those are usually related to domestic violence. In the context of a protest, the letter appears too open-ended, he said.

"(The police) do need to be careful. If you're telling somebody that they don't have a right to protest, then that person has a very valid argument that their charter rights are being infringed on."

Vancouver Const. Brian Montague said police do not keep track of the number of warning letters they issue, but similar letters were given to two or three protesters of Pidgin Restaurant in the Downtown Eastside in 2013, after their actions "escalated and became criminal."

"It provides documentation that someone has been clearly informed by police that their conduct is not lawful and takes away any confusion regarding (whether) their actions could result in arrest," he said.

The OPCC complaint, signed by lawyer Anna Pippus of Animal Justice on Freeman's behalf, said although activists regularly protest Snowflake Furs, it appears only Freeman has been ordered to stop.

"Mr. Freeman is a visible minority — the only Snowflake Furs protester with dark skin," the complaint states. "There are many witnesses who can confirm that Mr. Freeman has been no more or less 'intimidating' or 'aggressive' than any of the other protesters."

Montague said warning letters are issued regardless of "age, sex, race, beliefs or religion."

The OPCC declined to comment for confidentiality reasons.

Bernstein, the CEO of Snowflake Furs, said she has video of Freeman harassing staff and customers, and that once he followed an employee to a nearby coffee shop, which Freeman denied.

"The police, out of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of protesters, would not have bothered had there not been something significant to the case that this gentleman is not talking about," she said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

‘This isn’t who we are’: PM denounces pepper attack

CRIME

Syrians sprayed by assailant at welcome event

Matt Kieltyka
Metro | Vancouver

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was one of many Canadian public figures who took to social media over the weekend to denounce a pepper-spray attack on Syrian refugees in Vancouver.

The incident happened as approximately 100 people — including several newly arrived refugees — congregated outside Vancouver’s Muslim Association of Canada Centre after a welcome ceremony on Friday night.

Vancouver Police Department Chief Adam Palmer said an unidentified male person riding by on a bicycle approached the group and pepper-sprayed them.

Fifteen people were treated for exposure to pepper spray.

Palmer said police are on the search for the suspect and will treat the case as a “hate-motivated crime.”

“It’s a very troubling situation and the actions of one man have shed a negative light on a lot of the positive work that has been done to welcome the Syrian refugees into our communities,” Palmer said.

Over the weekend, a number of public figures, including the prime minister, released statements denouncing the attack.

“I condemn the attack on Syrian refugees in Vancouver,” Trudeau wrote on Twitter. “This isn’t who we are - and doesn’t reflect the warm welcome Canadians have offered.”

The Muslim Association of Canada, site of the attack on Canadian newcomers. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **Please join me in condemning (the attack) and welcoming new Canadians.** B. C. Premier Christy Clark

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson said the incident “was a disgusting display of hate - and Vancouver won’t stand for it.”

British Columbia Premier Christy Clark said the attack was intolerable.

“Please join me in condemning it, and welcoming new Canadians,” Clark said.

Canada has committed to accepting 25,000 refugees from war-torn Syrian by the end of February.

The Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia expects 2,000 of those to settle in the province.

B.C.’s newest refugees include Mohammad Kurdi and his family, whose three-year-old son, Alan, was photographed dead on a beach in Turkey after a boat ferrying refugees to Europe capsized last year.

That photo was published throughout the world and helped renew an international outpour of support for displaced Syrian families.

Mohammad, his wife and five children arrived in Vancouver Dec. 28, joining his sister Tima Kurdi, who lives in Port Coquitlam and has sponsored the family.

Mohammad and Tima now operate a local hair salon.

TALKS REOPEN

Assisted suicide case back

The British Columbia Civil Liberties Association and Government of Canada will be back in court Monday on the topic of physician-assisted dying.

The newly elected federal government is seeking a six-month delay to respond to the Supreme Court of Canada’s 2015 unanimous ruling that consenting adults who are suffering from painful life-ending and intolerable medical conditions have the right to die with the assistance of a doctor.

The court imposed a 12-month delay to give governments time to prepare legislation. The judgment will take effect Feb. 6 if an extension is not granted, but the new government is requesting more time.

The BCCLA, on behalf of several B.C. residents, will argue further delay “will cause critically ill Canadians to continue to live in suffering and die agonizing deaths against their wishes,” according to a statement.

Meanwhile, intervenors such as the Council of Canadians With Disabilities and Canadian Association for Community Living fear imposing the Feb. 6 ruling “would result in a failure to address the rights of vulnerable individuals, including persons with disabilities.”

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Tribute to Dal Richards

BC Place stadium will glow orange through the weekend as a tribute to late bandleader Dal Richards. Richards died just before midnight Dec. 31. A memorial service will be held Saturday afternoon at Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver. METRO

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Rescuers don't join mockery

OUTDOORS

Flak for hikers who stayed out past sunset not useful: Crews

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

Seven hikers who got lost after nightfall near Cypress Mountain because they wanted to see the sunset are getting online flak for their foolishness, but the crews that rescued them say it's unproductive to shame people for their mistakes.

North Shore Rescue (NSR) crews responded to a call that seven people, one in medical distress, were stranded on St. Mark's Summit on Saturday around 6 p.m., according to NSR's play-by-play of the incident on Facebook.

"It appears they pushed the light window to enjoy the sunset on the summit but turned around too late and became stranded without light," NSR wrote.

Crews were able to hike out with the six healthy hikers by 9:30 p.m., but the injured hiker wasn't back at base until midnight because that person required extra help.

Online comments were unsympathetic about the hikers' decision to travel without lights during a month when sunsets take place around 4:30 p.m. Some suggested the group should be nominated for the Darwin Awards, while others said they should have to pay for the rescue.

But in a polite counter-argument, North Shore Rescue wrote that it does not endorse charging people for mistakes and does not post mistakes to shame the people involved.

"We share mistakes ... with the hopes that at least one person reads about it and thinks twice before doing the same thing," the post states.

"If one person thinks twice, and it prevents (the need for) a rescue, education is working. In this case, while the individuals undoubtedly made errors, they did do the right thing in staying put once they became lost and calling for help."

North Shore Rescue crews hike the St. Mark's Summit trail after dark on Saturday in order to rescue seven lost hikers.
COURTESY NORTH SHORE RESCUE

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Canada denies refugee status for U.S. black man

IMMIGRATION

Kyle Canty cited fears of police abuse on application

Emily Jackson
Metro | Vancouver

Canada has denied refugee status to a black American man who claimed he could not safely return home due to racism against black people and his fear of police brutality.

Kyle Canty applied for refugee protection after arriving in British Columbia in September 2015, citing fears of being seriously abused or killed by police officers should he return to the United States.

Canty sought asylum a few days after police arrested him at a bus station in Salem, Ore.

Canty was arrested for trespassing while using the station's Wi-Fi even though a group of young white people was allowed to use the Internet. Canty has had numerous problems with unjustified police harassment, according to his application.

But after a hearing in Vancouver in October, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada rejected his application.

Despite the board's finding that Canty has a genuine fear of returning to the United States, it concluded he does not face a serious possibility of persecution because of his race.

"Canty is neither a Convention refugee nor a person in need of protection," IRB panel member Ron Yamauchi wrote in his decision.

Yamauchi noted that police stop and question African Americans most frequently compared to other racial groups and that police kill twice as many African Americans than white and Hispanic or Latino people.

"The existence of serious and troubling racial disparities in the enforcement of the law in America is amply documented," Yamauchi wrote.

There is a risk Canty could be stopped and questioned due to his skin colour, Yamauchi wrote, but that does not mean he faces a serious possibility of persecution.

"The claimant's own personal experiences with the police have not resulted in assault, excessive detention or lack of due process."

Canty plans to appeal the decision, according to an article he wrote for the Guardian in November outlining his reasons for applying for asylum.

"Throughout my life, police departments have harassed me and made me fear for my life — this is something many other people of color will have experienced too," he wrote. "Applying for asylum has been in the back of my mind for a long time, especially since I started reflecting on my experiences in the United States of America and educating myself on black history."

Canty is living in Vancouver on social assistance.

Cars line up to cross into the United States at Peace Arch State Park in May 2013. American citizen Kyle Canty applied for refugee status upon arrival in B.C. because of racism against black people. ELAINE THOMPSON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

> **"Throughout my life, police departments have harassed me and made me fear for my life — this is something many other people of color will have experienced too.** Kyle Canty

POLICE

Dead cyclist identified

The B.C. Coroners Service has identified 45-year-old Vancouver resident Juan Loro Avis as the cyclist who died last week after being struck by thrown garbage on the seawall.

Avis was riding along the False Creek seawall on Wednesday and was reportedly struck by a heavy object thrown by a man digging in a garbage bin.

He died the next morning from severe head injuries.

Vancouver police, who called the incident a "very bizarre set of circumstances," said the incident appears to have been an accident.

They are still looking for the man who allegedly threw the garbage towards the cyclist. METRO

Flight forced to land at Vancouver airport: RCMP

A United Airlines flight was forced to make an unscheduled stop in Vancouver on Saturday due to a security concern, according to Richmond RCMP.

Flight 1104 from Anchorage to Denver was rerouted to Vancouver International Airport at 4 a.m. because of an incident.

RCMP say a large contingent of officers were on scene to meet the plane on the tarmac and a male passenger was taken into custody.

The remaining passengers were escorted from the flight and screened, before continuing their journey to Colorado later in the day.

According to a CNN report, the flight was diverted due to a threatening message being found on board.

RCMP said the exact nature of the security concern is still under investigation but confirmed it was an isolated incident. METRO

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Salmon key to endangered giants

STUDY

Survival of killer whales dependent on sport fish stocks

Scientists who spent five years collecting and analyzing fecal samples from endangered killer whales near Seattle and Victoria found their diet consists almost solely of Chinook salmon in the summer, confirming the deep connection between them and salmon fishing's trophy catch.

Scientist Michael Ford of the Seattle-based Northwest Fisheries Sciences Center says DNA analysis of killer whale fecal matter confirmed more than 98 per cent of the July and August diet of the southern resident whales is salmon, particularly the Chinook salmon bound for British Columbia's Fraser River and its tributaries.

Scientists on both sides of the border say the study provides useful information to government officials tasked with managing whale recovery efforts and salmon stocks.

Scientists who studied fecal samples from endangered killer whales discovered their diet was mostly Chinook salmon in the summer. THE CANADIAN PRESS

"Increasing salmon abundance is definitely an important component to try and recover the whales," Ford said, adding that one of the goals of these sorts of studies is to get a better understanding of what salmon stocks the whales consume to help target recovery efforts. There are more than 80 southern resident killer whales in the Pacific Northwest, but the species remains listed as endangered facing triple threats of pollution, noise and food shortages.

Since December 2014, eight new calves have been born to the southern residents, signalling a healthy population, which some suggest is linked to plentiful Chinook stocks.

The study, published last week in the open access journal PLOS One, provides further evidence of the food-chain connection between killer whales and salmon, said Ford.

Ford said it is the first study to thoroughly analyze killer whale diet based on fecal samples. Prior studies that examined the remains of killer whale prey made similar salmon-diet conclusions, but the DNA analysis confirms it completely, he said.

The fecal samples were collected in Canadian and U.S. waters near the San Juan and Gulf Islands over a five-year period from 2006 to 2011, producing almost five million genetic sequences that pointed to a 98 per cent salmon diet, he said.

Scientists scoured whale feeding areas for fecal remains that float on the water, Ford said. The scientists also used dogs specially trained to pick up whale poop scent on the water, he said.

> **"Increasing salmon abundance is an important component to try and recover the whales."**
> Scientist Michael Ford

He said the study found killer whales will eat other salmon species in the late summer, but Chinook remain their top choice. Canadian whale scientist John Ford, who is no relation to Michael Ford, said the new study adds more weight to earlier Canadian studies that found Chinook are the prey of choice for southern resident killer whales whose survival appears linked to the salmon numbers.

"We've, since the 1990s, had evidence that Chinook is very important to these animals from our work and this recent study really confirms our results that we've developed over the last 15 years that really point to Chinook being so important to these animals," said Ford, head of Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans Cetacean Research Program at Nanaimo, B.C.

Ford said when Chinook stocks declined during the 1990s, the southern resident whales struggled.

"The mortality rates shot up 200 to 300 per cent (of) normal, and that this coincided with a coast-wide decline of Chinook salmon abundance," he said. "We reasoned that Chinook may well be of primary importance to the survival of these animals." THE CANADIAN PRESS

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SYRIA CRISIS

Mayor is refugee barber's first cut

Refugee and barber Mohammed Kurdi gave his first haircut in Canada to the mayor in his community, an honour the politician says symbolizes a fresh start for the family of a drowned Syrian boy.

Coquitlam Mayor Richard Stewart was Kurdi's debut customer this week at a salon opened by Tima Kurdi, the aunt of the three-year-old boy whose body washed ashore on a Turkish beach last September.

Stewart says it seemed as though Mohammed Kurdi took comfort in using the electric trimmer and barber scissors, because they were familiar tools while he is still getting accustomed to Canada.

The mayor says he was deeply honoured to receive the trim and that Kurdi was also appreciative, expressing that he wants to work in Canada and not rely on others for help. Kurdi, his wife and their five children arrived in B.C. in late December sponsored by Tima Kurdi, who has become an unofficial spokeswoman for people fleeing war-torn Syria.

Coquitlam Mayor Richard Stewart takes a selfie as he gets a hair cut from Syrian immigrant Mohammed Kurdi. THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Canadian government had pledged to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada, although it fell short of its initial plan to welcome 10,000 people by the end of 2015 and instead, nearly 7,000 have arrived so far. THE CANADIAN PRESS

ROADS

Crews piecing together details after truck crashes into Fraser river, killing two

Two men are dead after their vehicle veered off road and plunged into the Fraser River in Chilliwack.

Rescue crews responded around 1:30 Sunday morning to find a truck upside down and underwater.

Doug Fraser of Chilliwack Search and Rescue says the vehicle left a gravel road and dropped six metres over an embankment and into the frigid waters.

Fraser says it's uncertain how long the truck was in the river and that crews are trying to determine what caused the crash.

The RCMP says weather likely played a role in the incident. The names of the two men haven't been released. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Flames from a wildfire near Oliver, B.C., in August last year.
JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

A fire crew battles a blaze in the La Ronge area on northern Saskatchewan in July.
CONTRIBUTED/THE CANADIAN PRESS

An air tanker drops fire retardant on a hillside in West Kelowna, B.C. in July.
JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Wildfires draining firefighting reserves

PARKS

Busier fire seasons predicted due to warming

Wildfires scorched a record amount of Canada's national parks last year — the latest in a number of long, hot summers that have almost entirely depleted Parks Canada's firefighting reserve.

"We had a very busy fire year," said director of fire management Jeff Weir. "We had more wildfires than normal and those fires burned larger areas than normal."

The agency's annual fire report recorded 122 wildfires in 2015 that burned through 4,600 square kilometres — seven times the area of the city of Toronto. The yearly average is 82, and, in 2014, the amount of park land burned in non-prescribed fires was 3,000 square kilometres.

Most of the damage in 2015 occurred in a single park. Fire licked through 3,700 square kilometres of Wood Buffalo on the boundary between Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

Parks Canada reserves about $8 million a year to fight fires. Any money not spent is rolled into a reserve to be used in busy seasons.

$14 million

The cost of firefighting last summer. Parks Canada reserves about $8 million a year to fight fires.

Lightning strikes on tinder-dry forests made 2015 the third big fire year in a row. Firefighting cost $14 million last summer and the reserve is pretty much depleted, Weir said.

If it becomes necessary, the money would probably come from funds earmarked for other ecological restoration projects, Weir suggested.

Climate scientists have predicted that busier fire seasons will be one consequence of global warming and that will affect the parks, Weir said.

"If climate change is going to result in longer and drier summers … we're going to have a longer fire season, which will result in more ignitions and larger fires. Climate change is likely to increase our fire load across Canada."

Parks Canada also set a record for prescribed burns in 2015 which help restore a forest's natural mix of plant species and ages, and also helps keep normal populations of animals in the park.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

HISTORY

Library gets Stalin daughter's letters

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

A new collection arriving at the University of Toronto library reveals what it was like to grow up — quite literally — under one of the 20th century's most famous dictators.

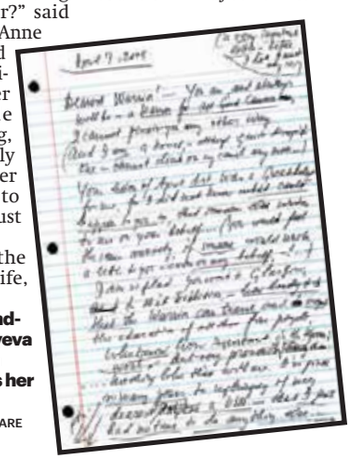
The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library has just acquired a collection of letters written by Svetlana Alliluyeva, the only daughter of former Soviet leader Josef Stalin.

"Can you imagine having Stalin as your father?" said the library's director, Anne Dondertman. "She had an amazing and difficult life. Her mother committed suicide when she was young, members of her family were disappeared, her first lover was sent to Siberia, and the list just goes on."

Written towards the end of Alliluyeva's life, the letters were sent to British artist Mary Burkett. The two women initially discussed art, but quickly developed a deeper friendship.

"She seemed to feel a bond with Mary from the start and she told her quite a bit about her personal life and what it was like growing up with her father," Dondertman said.

The correspondence was put up for auction after Burkett's death, and secured by author Rosemary Sullivan, whose recent book, Stalin's Daughter, is an intensely researched account of Alliluyeva's life.



In her later correspondence, Svetlana Alliluyeva often refers to British artist Mary Burkett as her "dearest warrior."
COURTESY THOMAS FISHER RARE BOOK LIBRARY

IN BRIEF

New anti-nuke effort
Canada plans to kick-start a long-stalled international effort aimed at ridding the world of the key ingredients needed for nuclear weapons. Canada's United Nations ambassador to Geneva will spearhead the creation of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty or FMCT.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Line 9 heads for top court
The Chippewas of the Thames First Nation is taking its fight against Enbridge Inc., the National Energy Board and the Attorney General of Canada over the Line 9 pipeline — which runs between Sarnia, Ont., and Montreal — to the Supreme Court of Canada.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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IN BRIEF

France's president, dignitaries honour victims of extremist attacks in Paris

France's President Francois Hollande and other dignitaries held a special ceremony Sunday to honour all those killed in Islamic extremist violence around Paris in 2015 — a year when the European way of life was targeted.

The ceremony took place at Place de la Republique, which has become a symbol of French solidarity since the attacks, which began Jan. 7, 2015, with the Charlie Hebdo killings.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. Islam advocacy group seeks apology from Trump

An advocacy group is seeking an apology from Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump after a Muslim woman standing in silent protest at one of his rallies was heckled and escorted out. CAIR national executive director Nihad Awad said Saturday afternoon she hadn't received any response.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GERMANY

Cologne attacks must be investigated: Minister

German authorities need to quickly determine whether a string of New Year's Eve sexual assaults and robberies in Cologne blamed largely on foreigners may be linked to similar offences in other cities, the justice minister said in comments published Sunday.

Authorities and witnesses say the attackers were among about 1,000 people, mostly men, gathered at Cologne's central train station, some of whom broke off into small groups that groped and robbed women.

"If such a horde gathers in order to commit crimes, that appears in some form to be planned," Justice Minister Heiko Maas told the newspaper Bild.

"Nobody can tell me that this was not co-ordinated or prepared."

The attacks are still being investigated, but police have said their focus is on suspects of primarily North African origin, which has put pressure on Chancellor Angela Merkel's government and its open-door policy to asylum seekers. Nearly 1.1 million migrants arrived in Germany in 2015 alone.

She announced a proposal Saturday that would make it easier to deport migrants who commit crimes, which still needs parliamentary approval.

Cologne police said Sunday that 516 criminal complaints had now been filed with them in connection to the New Year's attacks, about 40 per cent of which involve allegations of sexual offences.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police use pepper spray to control protesters of the New Year's Eve sex attacks on Saturday in Cologne, Germany.
SASCHA SCHUERMANN/GETTY

A woman reads La Jornada newspaper in Mexico City on Sunday which shows a picture of drug lord Joaquin Guzman, a.k.a. "El Chapo," right, shaking hands with actor Sean Penn. **Authorities hope to question Penn about his interview.** AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Penn interview led to El Chapo

MEXICO

Authorities raided hideout days after chat

Mexican officials say Sean Penn's contacts with drug lord Joaquin (El Chapo) Guzman helped them track the fugitive down — even if he slipped away from an initial raid on the hideout where the actor met him.

Penn's article on Guzman was published late Saturday by Rolling Stone magazine, a day after Mexican marines captured the world's most wanted kingpin in a raid on the city of Los Mochis near the Gulf of California.

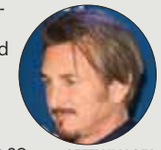
Penn wrote of elaborate security precautions, but also said that as he flew to Mexico on Oct. 2 for the meeting: "I see no spying eyes, but I assume they are there." He was apparently right.

A Mexican federal law enforcement official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Penn interview led authorities to Guzman in the area of Tamazula, a rural part of Durango state.

They raided Guzman's remote hideout a few days after the interview and narrowly missed capturing Guzman, whose July escape from Mexico's top security prison — through a 1.5-kilometre tunnel — had embarrassed President Enrique Pena Nieto and made his capture a national priority.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CRITICISM



GETTY IMAGES

Sean Penn's interview with Guzman has prompted criticism throughout the U.S. and led some social media satirists to wonder whether the actor will hold other interviews with leaders of terror organizations, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Qaida.

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MIDDLE EAST

Undermanned Afghani forces thinned out by 'ghost' soldiers

Afghan forces are struggling to man the front lines against a resurgent Taliban, in part because of untold numbers of "ghost" troops who are paid salaries but exist only on paper.

The nationwide problem has been particularly severe in the southern Helmand province, where the Taliban have seized vast tracts of territory in the 12 months since the U.S. and NATO formally ended their combat mission and switched to training and support.

"At checkpoints where 20 soldiers should be present, there are only eight or 10," said Karim Atal, head of Helmand's provincial council. "It's because some people are getting paid a salary but not doing the job because they are related to someone important, like a local warlord."

In some cases, the "ghost" designation is more literal — dead soldiers and police remain on the books, with senior police or army officials pocketing their salaries, Atal said.

He estimates 40 per cent of registered forces don't exist, and says the lack of manpower has helped the Taliban seize 65 per cent of the province and threaten the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah.

Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi acknowledged the problem and said an investigation has been launched.

"No one knows the exact numbers of the Afghan National Defence Forces," an Afghan official said on condition of anonymity.

He said the best internal estimates put the number at around 120,000, less than a third of what's needed to secure the country. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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TRANSLINK

Long hours don't kill relationships

STUDY

Dual-career couples make extra effort after work

It's a common belief that working longer hours can only cause problems in your relationship. However new research has shown that there is no link with an unhappy relationship, and in fact even the opposite might be true.

A team of researchers studied 285 couples in which both partners were pursuing their careers to look at a possible negative effect of long working hours on their relationships.

The majority of the participants worked as academics at a university, with the remaining participants working in academic professions such as teaching or law or in managerial or technical positions such as IT consultant or engineer.

"Conventional wisdom and research seem to suggest that partners in dual-career couples have to decide whether they would rather risk their careers or their romantic relationship. …Our research questions the assumption that working longer hours is hazardous for all romantic relationship. "

To answer their questions the researchers looked at the hours participants worked, their satisfaction with their relationship, and their level of self-disclosure in their relationship, which measured their ability to express a need, wish, or want to their partner.

Participants answered three online questionnaires in total, answering two questionnaires to start and then the third six months later.

Instead of finding that working longer hours had a negative effect on a couple's relationship, the team found that couples actually made extra effort with each other after work to make up for time lost with their partners through working long hours, leading the researchers to suggest that longer working hours could in some cases even be beneficial for a relationship. AFP

PUBLISHED

The study was published by SAGE in the journal Human Relations in partnership with the Tavistock Institute in the U.K.

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A trader works at the New York Stock Exchange last week as stocks opened lower on signs of belligerence in North Korea and weakening of China's economy. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

STOCK MARKETS

Investors brace for second rocky week

Tumult in China triggered the worst opening week for U.S. stocks in history, and this week investors could get plenty more to worry about.

Earnings for companies in the Standard and Poor's 500 index are forecast to drop for the second straight quarter, a rare occurrence outside a recession. Despite a rebounding jobs market, the U.S. did not grow fast enough to boost profits, and once surging developing economies that helped lift foreign sales slowed dramatically.

All this would be worrisome enough at any time, but investors are particularly jittery now. U.S. stocks are expensive by some measures, even after slipping in 2015 and falling sharply in the first week of the year. That leaves little room for more disappointing news.

One widely respected gauge, the so-called Shiller earnings ratio, is flashing warning signs. Named after Nobel Prize winner Robert Shiller of Yale, the ratio compares the price of stocks to annual earnings averaged over 10 years. The measure is now 25, much higher — meaning more expensive — than the long-term average of 18.

"When expectations are as high as they are, that's a problem," says Jack Ablin, chief investment officer of BMO Private Bank.

Companies begin reporting their results for the October-December quarter on Monday. Earnings per share for the companies in S&P 500 is expected to have dropped 5.5 per cent compared to a year earlier, according to S&P Capital IQ, a research firm. Revenues are forecast to fall for a fourth quarter in row.

This wasn't supposed to happen. A year ago financial analysts said earnings for the October-December quarter would jump 12 per cent, and urged investors to buy accordingly. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

When expectations are as high as they are, that's a problem.
Jack Ablin

metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Monday, January 11, 2016

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD **ROSIE ON ROSIE**

The CBC announced Rosemary Barton's appointment as the official new host of Power & Politics last week, which should come as no surprise to anyone who witnessed her famous dressing-down of former Immigration Minister Chris Alexander.

Forceful, yet affable. Sharp, but not cutting. Rosemary Barton holds court nightly with politicians from across the country as the official new host of Power & Politics.

The CBC announced the appointment last week, which should come as no surprise to anyone who witnessed her famous dressing-down of Chris Alexander over the Syrian refugee crisis in September. Or perhaps to anyone who's watched her captain the show since.

Her appointment lends stability to a program thrown into disarray after former host Evan Solomon's public downfall over revelations he took a cut from art deals with some of the show's guests. And it puts her in the position of earning the public's trust when many high-profile journalists are viewed with skepticism for cosying up too closely to the powerful people they're meant to scrutinize.

"You have some sort of relationship with them," Barton tells me over Skype from the CBC's Ottawa bureau. "You have to keep that relationship, it has to be respectful, but at the same time you have to go toe-to-toe with them, because otherwise you're not going to get the answers you need."

Throughout our conversation, Barton is friendly, chatty, quick to laugh. On-air, though, she aims to be tough. "There is an understanding that we all have jobs to do. You can be frustrated or angry or mad at someone if they're being too tough on you one day, but that is how democracy works. I've had people pout after an interview, but I've never had anyone say, 'Well I'm never coming back on the show because it was too hard.'"

You can be frustrated or angry or mad at someone if they're being too tough on you one day, but that is how democracy works.
Rosemary Barton

HONEYMOON'S OVER The CBC's Rosemary Barton told Rosemary Westwood that her tough questions are upsetting people who want to see Trudeau succeed. CONTRIBUTED

Born in Winnipeg in 1976, Barton didn't grow up with dreams of political reporting. A professor put her up for a job as a chase producer for a program on ICI RDI, the CBC's French news network, while she was studying French literature at College Universitaire de Saint-Boniface. That led to a master's degree in journalism from Carleton, by which point she was hooked on TV reporting.

"I like the power of TV, and I know it's potentially waning for all sorts of reasons, but it's immediate. It's the, you know, news is breaking, and you run in front of a camera and tell the story."

She found a pivotal political training ground as a reporter for the CBC at the National Assembly in Quebec City, at a time of high tension over sovereignty issues.

"I not only fell in love with politics, but I also felt in love with that kind of reporting," she says. "Because I was a young woman, working in her second language (French), having to try and get English clips from people, I had to be pretty aggressive. People working at the National Assembly are some of the top political reporters in the country. You had to be really ballsy, for lack of a better word, and I learned a lot."

Barton moved to Ottawa, and by the time crisis hit Power & Politics, she was the regular Friday host and fill-in for Solomon. In June, after he was fired, Barton took over as interim host. In August, Stephen Harper called the federal election. Bemoaned by some for its record length, the campaign proved crucial for Barton's chops as host.

"Both the length of the campaign and the intensity of that campaign helped me get better, for sure. If it had been a 30-day campaign, I'm not sure I would have been able to get where I needed to go."

She cites Peter Mansbrige among the reporters she admires. From Don Newman, former Power & Politics host, she learned the art of being a gentleman "while being difficult." From Susan Bonner, a mentor figure who filled in for Newman, she found support as a woman in politics.

Amid the extended honeymoon for Trudeau's Liberals, Barton — an admittedly deep cynic — now finds herself in the odd position of getting flak from the audience for being too hard on the government.

"The amount of ripping I get on Twitter when I say to John McCallum, 'Hey, you broke your promise on the refugees, huh?' (They're) not welcome, those questions, from lot of Canadians who want to see this government succeed, and who are all about the sunny ways."

A pause.

"I don't really care," she says with a short laugh. "At some point over the next four years, a promise will be bent or broken and the government will disappoint people, and it's important people know that they say one thing and they're doing something else."

Most especially, she foresees trouble with the Liberals' budget promises.

I tell her I want to end on a topic close to my heart: whether she goes by Rosie or Rosemary (her Twitter handle says one thing, her bio another and on-air, guests and colleagues call her both). As it turns out, either one is fine.

"To my friends I'm Rosie, and I guess I have a lot of friends now," she says.

Whining about high property value? Be happy you have heat

CITY HOLLER
Trish Kelly

Property assessments were sent out to B.C. homeowners last week. Stories of homeowner panic due to property value increases of up to 30 per cent in certain Vancouver neighbourhoods flooded the Internet. I'm a condo owner, so I understand an increase in value could translate to an increase in property taxes.

Speaking homeowner to homeowner, I have to say, if your biggest housing issue in Vancouver is that your property value jumped, you're doing OK. Many of your neighbours deal with terrible housing conditions, and so much fuss over property values is just plain hyperbole.

I met a very kind and friendly man this week. He lives in a single room occupancy hotel (SRO) in the Downtown Eastside, and he described the conditions as pure hell. He knew there would be no kitchen or private bathroom, and I'm sure he'd heard about the rodents and cockroaches, but the broken elevators and months without heat or hot water were not part of what he expected.

SRO residents in at least three SRO hotels right now are dealing with a lack of hot water or heat.

The city's regulations say that a warning can be issued to the landlord, and if repairs are not made within 60 days, the city can step in to complete the repairs and then charge costs back to the landlord.

But in an interview on CBC Television last week, City Councillor Kerry Jang took pains to manage host Andrew Chang's expectations about any real action from the city. Councillor Jang explained the challenges of maintaining such old buildings, and the dent in profitability for the slumlords. I'm sure most landlords know city orders are an empty threat.

Sixty days is a long time. In Vancouver, that's the entire length of our winter. To put it another way, baby cockroaches hatching the day the city issues such an order will have reached sexual maturity and bred before the 60-day deadline passes.

The city should use its power and step in to make such repairs. And while it's at it, it should charge above-market rates for the work completed. Knowing the city will follow through on its threat, and that it will cost slumlords more than if they'd had the work done themselves, should make them move faster.

Adding further barriers to suffering tenants, last month the provincial government quietly doubled the cost of filing a dispute against a negligent landlord to $100 — an impossible sum for those in SROs.

SRO residents need their dire concerns dealt with, and it's not getting easier. The city needs to flex every muscle it has.

Trish Kelly lives and writes in East Vancouver. Follow her @trishkellyc

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The RSP rules that every investor needs to know

NEST EGG

Getting the most out of this important investment

Michelle Williams

Saving for your retirement is all about planning. If you're ready to contribute to a retirement savings plan (RSP), there are some rules of engagement you should know.

Make the most of your retirement savings plan by maximizing your tax savings. ISTOCK

How much, how often?
You can make contributions as often as you like.

"The simplest way in terms of budget is to make regular contributions and sync it to your payroll deposits so you can make automated payments to your RSP," says Alan Cameron, investment advisor for Investment Planning Counsel. For freelancers or others who don't get a regular paycheque, make contributions throughout the year as funds permit.

"The big benefit of doing this versus racing to make a lump-sum payment at the end of the RSP season is that you can benefit from additional months of growth on your investment because your money has been working for you longer," he says.

How much you contribute is also up to you, though there are limits — you can see exactly what your maximum allowable contribution is by looking at the bottom of your notice of assessment.

"In any given year, the amount of RSP deduction room you're granted is based on your previous year's income, times 18 per cent, minus pension adjustments — anything that went into pensions on your behalf by your employer," explains Cameron. "Also added to this are any unused contribution allowances going back to 1991."

The interesting thing about investing in January and February (during the first 60 days of the new year) is that you can use those contributions toward either the previous or the current year.

"For those who want to make a contribution by the deadline, it can be the difference between owing money and getting a refund," Cameron says. "But you also have the option to use it against the coming year."

How can you maximize your tax savings?
Take advantage of a spousal RSP.

"The spouse who makes the contribution — presumably the higher-earning spouse — gets the tax deduction," says Ron Dale, partner at Bongard Dale Fried Chartered Accountants. "And if the money stays in the RSP for at least three years from the date of the last contribution, the income stays with the lower-income spouse to be taxed at a lower rate when it's withdrawn."

How long should you be contributing?
Once you turn 18, you can contribute to your RSP until Dec. 31 of the year you turn 71. At some point before the end of that calendar year, your RSP must be converted to an RIF (retirement income fund) and you must begin withdrawing your money. Tax-deferred growth continues until the money is withdrawn, then you're taxed based on your current income.

"Under the old rules," explains Cameron, "7.38 per cent had to be drawn in the first year. Now it's 5.28 per cent."

RIFs are flexible — beyond the required annual minimum, you can withdraw as much as you want, as often as you want.

Where does the money you've invested go?
Your contribution can be placed in a number of investment vehicles, such as mortgages, GICs, stocks, bonds, currencies, mutual trust funds, and more, says Dale. "There are many investments which can be held in your RSP, called qualified investments, and other investments that are considered non-qualified and cannot go into an RSP. These lists are rather long, but you can go online to see what qualifies and what doesn't."

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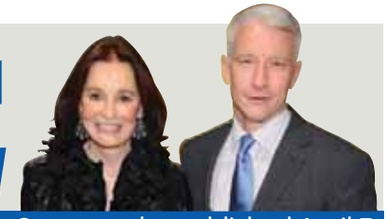


Joint memoir by mother-and-son Gloria Vanderbilt and Anderson Cooper to be published April 5

It was a night full of surprises

AWARDS

Oscar race still wide open after Golden Globes drama

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Hollywood

The Hollywood Foreign Press certainly likes surprising people, if their picks for winners of the Golden Globes last night were any indication. The capricious collection of international journalists went against the grain in several categories.

The night started off with plenty of unexpected victories, including Kate Winslet winning best supporting actress for her role in Steve Jobs, beating out favourites Jane Fonda and Alicia Vikander; and Maura Tierney winning on the TV side for her supporting role in The Affair. The surprises even seems to catch the winners off-guard. "Is this really happening?" Winslet asked from the stage.

In the movie categories, it was a little less shocking as Leonardo DiCaprio won best actor in a motion picture drama for his role as legendary frontiersman Hugh Glass in The Revenant.

Matt Damon strikes a pose in the press room with his best actor in a comedy Golden Globe for his starring role in The Martian. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Earlier, Matt Damon took home best actor in a comedy for The Martian, beating out The Big Short stars Christian Bale and Steve Carell. "It's literally been 18 years since I've been here doing this," Damon said during his speech. And Sylvester Stallone stunned the crowd with a win for his reprisal of Rocky Balboa in Creed. In his speech, he thanked his career-defining character for being "the best friend I ever had." But he failed to thank his director, Ryan Coogler, or co-star, Michael B. Jordan.

But the biggest surprises were on television. Crazy Ex-Girlfriend star Rachel Bloom beat out vets like Lily Tomlin and Julia Louis Dreyfus for best actress in a comedy series, and Lady Gaga took home a Globe for American Horror Story.

Amazon's little-watched Mozart in the Jungle won best comedy series, besting Veep, Orange is the New Black and Transparent, and best actor for star Gael Garcia Bernal. And freshman hacker drama Mr. Robot beat out Game of Thrones for best series.

At least Jon Hamm's win for the final season of Mad Men was expected — and incredibly welcome, and fan favourite Taraji P. Henson brought home a win for Empire. And about the only thing that wasn't a surprise was Jennifer Lawrence winning for Joy, since the HFPA can't not give an award to her.

With so many surprises and head-scratching, though, it's unclear how this year's Golden Globes wins will impact an already scattershot awards season with no clear front-runners.

Maybe Thursday's Oscar nominations announcements will solidify a few of the key races.

OH, RICKY

Host lives up to his controversial rep

Once again, host Ricky Gervais didn't disappoint, packing in plenty of eyebrow-raising remarks:

- "Caitlyn Jenner has done a lot this year for trans visibility. She didn't do a lot for women drivers, though."
- "To be fair, the Martian was a lot funnier than Pixels. But to be fair, so was Schindler's List."
- "On Matt Damon: "He's the only person Ben Affleck hasn't been unfaithful to."

FOR ALL THE WINNERS
metronews.ca

DAZZLING DRESSES
FIVE LOOKS THAT WON THE RED CARPET

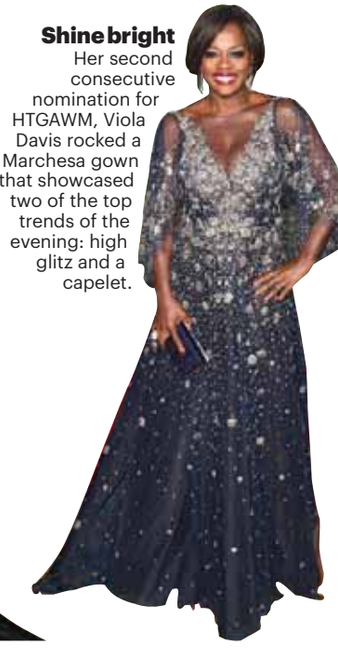
ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES EXCEPT LADY GAGA: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

White hot
A muse for the maison, it's no surprise double nominee Alicia Vikander chose to wear Louis Vuitton after appearing in the luxury house's FW15 campaign.

Classic to contemporary
Jennifer Lawrence, who won for best actress in a musical or comedy, walks the line between glamour and gamine in Dior.

Golden Girl
Among the metallics crowd, Brie Larson shined with this golden number from Calvin Klein. Larson won for best actress in a motion picture drama. This was Larson's first nomination and award at the Golden Globes.

Old-school glam
Lady Gaga, who won a best actress award for her role in American Horror Story, went classic Hollywood with platinum Marilyn hair and a black off-the-shoulder custom dress by Versace.



Shine bright
Her second consecutive nomination for HTGAWM, Viola Davis rocked a Marchesa gown that showcased two of the top trends of the evening: high glitz and a capelet.

5 CRIME DOCS FOR ARMCHAIR DETECTIVES

If you enjoyed Making a Murderer and are looking for more from the genre, here are five must-see true crime documentaries. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 The Staircase

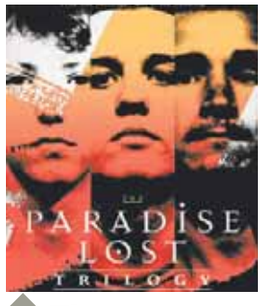
Academy Award-winning documentarian Jean-Xavier de Lestrade made this hugely compelling, eight-part series in 2004, focusing on North Carolina newspaper columnist and novelist Michael Peterson, whose wife Kathleen died under mysterious circumstances in 2001 at the bottom of a set of stairs in their home. Michael claimed Kathleen fell, yet he was convicted of her murder in 2003. However, that wasn't the story's end. A slew of startling revelations about Michael Peterson are woven into the film and, even if you'd firmly decided who to believe by the end of it, de Lestrade furthers the debate with a 2012 sequel (The Staircase 2: The Last Chance) that you'll want to check out. A third is reportedly in the works too. **Available on: Amazon.ca**

2 The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst

This HBO series has just six episodes. But director Andrew Jarecki didn't need more than to stun audiences with his documentary. All he needed was an unforgettably eccentric, bitter multimillionaire suspected of multiple murders, the heinous effect of money on the law and a series ending that will astonish even the most veteran true crime observers. When they say truth is stranger than fiction, The Jinx is what they're talking about. **Available on: HBO on demand**

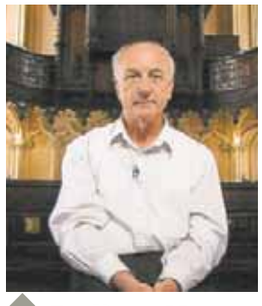
3 The Central Park Five

This 2012 documentary examines the infamous, brutal rape and assault of a female jogger in New York City's Central Park, and five young men who were charged with and convicted of the 1989 crime. Made by Sarah Burns (daughter of documentary icon Ken Burns) and David McMahon, it is a story of racial tensions, class, coerced confession and justice system sinkholes. Oh and Donald Trump plays a notable, shameful role. Timely for many reasons. **Available on: Netflix**



4 The Paradise Lost trilogy

In 1993, directors Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky began chronicling the tragic murders of three prepubescent boys in West Memphis, Ark., and the arrests of three teenage boys in connection with the case. Over the next eight years, they made three films for HBO that paint an utterly disturbing picture of mob mentality, media firestorms and the wrongfully convicted. **Available on: iTunes**



5 Deliver Us From Evil

Made in 2006 by director/producer Amy Berg, this is the story of Catholic priest Oliver O'Grady, who raped and sexually assaulted children in numerous American parishes throughout the 1970s. Rather than being charged for his crimes, O'Grady was transferred around the country by a church hierarchy that knew something was terribly wrong and refused to address it. O'Grady and his victims are interviewed by Berg. **Available on: iTunes**

JOHANNA SCHNELLER **WHAT I'M WATCHING**

It's easy to trace the track of Obama's tears

THE SHOW: Barack Obama News Conference, Jan. 5
THE MOMENT: Obama crying

Barack Obama weeps at Jan. 5 news conference. GETTY IMAGES

The U.S. President stands at a podium, listing some steps he'd like the U.S. to take to curb gun violence. Then, looking grim, he invokes rhetoric beloved by Americans: "Our inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," he says, "were stripped from college kids in Blacksburg and Santa Barbara, from high schoolers in Columbine, and from first-graders in Newtown." He chokes up. "First graders," he repeats. As he wipes away tears, dozens of cameras click.

After watching a leader of the free world weep on TV, people reacted differently. The pundits on Fox questioned why Obama didn't cry over victims of terror. The late-night talk show hosts lambasted Fox.

I have my own idea about why the president wept. It wasn't for the 33,599 people who died by gun in the U.S. in 2014. It wasn't because there were more mass shootings than days in the year. It wasn't even for the slain students. It was because Obama knows that nothing he does or says — not even invoking six-year-olds cut in half by machine-gun fire — will convince his colleagues in government to take measures to stop it. He wept from helplessness. The image of Obama crying will be a defining one for his presidency. Not because he's compassionate (which he clearly is), but because history will judge gun violence to be the major failure of his tenure. Looking into his exhausted eyes, you can see he agrees.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

MINISERIES

Kerry 'terrified' to portray real person

Kerry Washington says she was acutely aware of the challenge of playing Anita Hill in a miniseries dramatizing Clarence Thomas' Supreme Court confirmation hearings. "I was terrified. Portraying somebody who's real is a different kind of responsibility, especially when they're alive. That significance was not lost on me," Washington told a TV critics' meeting Thursday.

Washington, who is also an executive producer on HBO's Confirmation, debuting in April, said she was 14 in 1991 when Hill emerged as a witness against Thomas, accusing him of workplace sexual harassment a decade before. The actress recalled her parents' passionate and contrasting reactions to the hearings, which she said made her determined that the miniseries avoid any "one-note" approach to the event and the people involved.

Washington stars as Anita Hill in biopic. GETTY IMAGES

Thomas is played by Wendell Pierce (Treme, Ray Donovan), who said he searched "for the humanity of the character" as actors typically do. Thomas, who denied Hill's allegations, remains a Supreme Court justice. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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How to set your financial compass

PLANNING

Map out your money goals before making big decisions

Gail Vaz-Oxlade
For Metro Canada

A financial plan will help you keep your money priorities on track as life brings changes. ISTOCK

Welcome to 2016. It's going to be a stellar year. Well, it could be. It could be if you are willing to stop managing your money by the seat of your pants and actually make a plan.

Type "financial planning" into Google and it takes just .7 of a second to get 104 million hits. Is it any wonder people are puzzled?

Maybe the place to start is with what a financial plan isn't. A financial plan is NOT a two-page document or a 10-page report you get after spending time talking to an expert. Nor is it what you have to do save for retirement or invest your money. And it certainly isn't buying a lottery ticket and crossing your fingers.

There are thousands of ways in which you will use our money over your life. A financial plan is a road map to make sure you're doing what you want with that money. It involves:

- setting goals
- managing your cash flow,
- creating an emergency fund
- maintaining a healthy credit identity
- saving and investing
- mitigating life's risks
- minimizing your taxes
- creating an estate plan.

As your life and priorities change, so too must your plan. There's no way to lay one plan and then make it to the end without some adjustments. You'd be some kind of boring if that were possible. Nope, a well-lived life requires that if you change your direction, you change your goals and then change your financial plan to match.

You might start out thinking that you're going to buy a home in the next five years. But then you find yourself "with child" and suddenly you're either panicked about not being able to afford it, or determined to make home-ownership happen before baby shows up. Hold your horses for a minute. If you make this an emotional decision, you could end up making a really bad decision. Instead, you want to look at your financial plan and see how you're doing, what you can tweak and what that change in direction will mean in terms of your other goals.

A financial plan is about having a general sense of what you want to achieve, and then deciding what's most important and what will have to take a back seat. Maybe you won't be able to afford that home until you've finished your mat leave. Or maybe you'll reduce your mat leave so you can get back to the full income you need to make the mortgage payments.

In every step of life you have to make choices. So too it is with your money. You'll have to decide — and keep deciding — what's most important. Having a financial plan keeps your priorities front and centre so you don't end up going off half-cocked when making those decisions.

For more money advice, visit Gail's website at gailvazoxlade.com

$ MAKE YOUR MONEY WORK FOR YOU

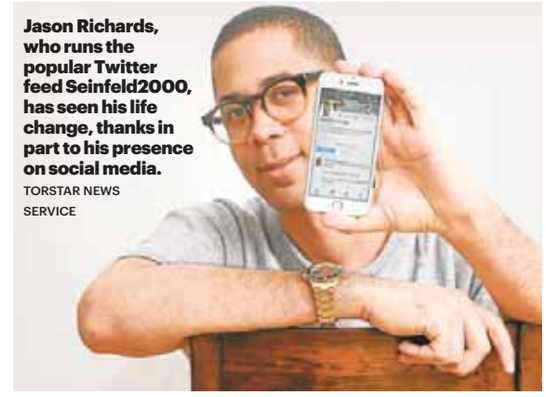
Things to consider when making your financial plan

A financial plan is how you will use all that money you're working so hard for to meet your needs and achieve your goals.

- Will you get married?
- Will you go back to school?
- Will you move across the country?
- Will you buy a home?
- Will you have children?
- Will you help put kids through university?
- Will you buy a car? Will you finance that car? How will you finance that car?

COMEDY PLATFORM

Writing free jokes for social media can pay off



Jason Richards, who runs the popular Twitter feed Seinfeld2000, has seen his life change, thanks in part to his presence on social media. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

It was on a whim and a slow day at work that Jason Richards first dragged Seinfeld into the surreal with a parody account about only slightly more than nothing.

At the time, @SeinfeldToday had recently become a sensation by tweeting modern technology-based plot lines for the classic sitcom: George surfs Tinder, Kramer plays Candy Crush, Elaine watches Netflix, etc.

To Richards, a Seinfeld fan, the account was irritatingly unfunny and ubiquitous. So the Toronto native acted on "unkind instincts" and created @Seinfeld2000, his own bizarro-world that explored the same concept from the point of view of a "total imbecile" who's tragically obsessed with one question: Imagine if Seinfeld was still on TV today?

"I remember very clearly thinking, 'I'm going to do this for two or three days, max,'" Richards said. "I'll blow off a little steam and then I'm going to get on with my life."

Yada yada yada — three years have passed, and Richards now has more than 300,000 Twitter and Instagram followers.

That places the 33-year-old in rarefied air among the many funny people building followings online. Where Twitter was once a fertile frontier for undiscovered comic talent it has gradually become harder to break out.

"Now that it's not new anymore the chances of being crowned a 'Twitter sensation' are slim," said comedian Ted Travelstead. "The field gets glutted the longer it's around."

If the rate of breakthroughs on Twitter has slowed, what's motivating people to pour hours into jokes they're giving away?

Richards always considered @Seinfeld2000 a niche pursuit. So the account's growth has been, to quote Seinfeld's Jackie Chiles, outrageous, egregious, preposterous. Richards was profiled by the New York Times, found famous fans in Aziz Ansari, the Weeknd and Ezra Koenig, and has created a startling number of spinoffs including a video game, interactive story, T-shirt line, ebook, collaboration with How to Dress Well and a lineup of custom emojis.

In this particular economy, exposure is the biggest payoff.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

metro SPORTS

Milos Raonic beat Roger Federer 6-4, 6-4 Sunday in the Brisbane International final, reversing the outcome of last year's decider

Chris Higgins joined the Canucks at the trade deadline in 2011. SEAN M. HAFFEY/GETTY IMAGES

NHL

Canucks actively shopping Higgins

Cam Tucker
Metro | Vancouver

After acquiring forward Emerson Etem from New York on Friday, the Vancouver Canucks have publicly stated they are exploring trade options for veteran forward Chris Higgins.

"As part of our transition to a younger team, I can confirm we're exploring trade options for Chris Higgins so we can create more roster space for our younger players to develop," said general manager Jim Benning in a statement Sunday.

"Chris is a quality person who has been an important member of our team for nearly five seasons. Our focus has been on finding a positive new situation for him and we will continue to do so."

Higgins joined the Canucks at the trade deadline in 2011. He's an unrestricted free agent at the end of the 2016-17 season. His current deal comes with a $2.5-million cap hit and limited no-trade clause, as per General Fanager.

It will be interesting to see what the Canucks can get in return for Higgins, especially given his age and the club's formal acknowledgement they are trying to deal him.

Higgins, 32, got a late start to the season due to a foot injury. He's appeared in 25 games, with two goals and one assist.

He was a healthy scratch earlier this week against Carolina, but he played in Saturday's OT loss.

NEXT GAME

The Canucks host the Florida Panthers on Monday, in the concluding game of a seven-game homestand.

Seahawks' despair erased by 'grace'

NFL PLAYOFFS

Field-goal miss sends Seattle through to face Carolina

Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman tackles Adrian Peterson on Sunday. Peterson had 45 yards rushing and a pivotal fumble in the Vikings' loss. KIICHIRO SATO/GETTY IMAGES

Russell Wilson and the Seattle Seahawks needed more than three quarters to warm up at Minnesota, their quest to avenge last year's Super Bowl loss nearly frozen before it began.

The Vikings, after gritting through this grind-it-out wild-card round playoff game, booted their chance to beat the two-time defending NFC champions. Blair Walsh's 27-yard field-goal try into the frigid wind hooked left with 22 seconds remaining, handing the Seahawks a 10-9 win over the stunned Vikings on a Sunday in below-zero weather that tied for the third-coldest NFL game on record.

"A lot of people would have folded up and said, 'That's it,' but we've got a team full of fighters," Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman said.

The Seahawks (11-6) didn't score until Russell Wilson's short touchdown pass to Doug Baldwin early in the fourth quarter. Then, a fumble by Adrian Peterson for the Vikings on the next possession set up a field goal by Steven Hauschka.

The Vikings (11-6) took the ball for the deciding drive with 1:42 left at their 39 and, aided by a pass interference penalty on Kam Chancellor, drove deep into Seattle's territory. After draining the clock for the seemingly inevitable win, Walsh simply missed the winner after making all three of his earlier attempts.

SUNDAY **In Minneapolis**

10	9
SEAHAWKS	VIKINGS

"That's called grace," Chancellor said. "That's all it is."

Seattle will play next weekend at Carolina, where the Panthers had a first-round bye in balmy mid-50s weather.

"I think we were fortunate that we got the win," Seahawks coach Pete Carroll said. "A lot of those times, guys make those kicks. There's a high percentage that they make them, but you've still got to do it."

Walsh didn't hide. Holder Jeff Locke had the laces turned in, not out, but there were no excuses to be made.

"You're confident, but you never think that you have it or take it for granted," Walsh said, subdued with glassy eyes in the locker-room afterward. "I just didn't put a swing on it that would be acceptable by anybody's standards."

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Jolly Rodgers rallies to plunder Redskins

NFL PLAYOFFS

Green Bay find form after poor start to secure Cardinals clash

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers pumps his fist as he walks off the field in the closing minutes. ALEX BRANDON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Aaron Rodgers did a jig after his first touchdown pass. Later, he was smiling and nodding and thrusting both arms overhead. And why not? He has a lot more fun when his offence is balanced — and the Green Bay Packers score seemingly at will.

Spurred by a bit of hurry-up, and a bunch of running, the wild-card Packers got going after a rough start Sunday, with Rodgers throwing for a pair of TDs while Eddie Lacy and James Starks each rushed for a score, and Green Bay beat the NFC East champion Washington Redskins 35-18 to reach the divisional round.

Rodgers opened 1 for 8, and the Packers' first four drives ended this way: punt, safety, punt, punt. They had all of 11 yards — yes, just 11 — after one quarter. But trailing 11-0 early in the second quarter, two-time NFL MVP Rodgers and the Packers suddenly began to show the sort of ability to gain yards in chunks and put points on the board they had been missing while losing six of their final 10 games and letting the NFC North title slip away.

Green Bay (11-6) will play at the No. 2 seed Arizona Cardinals on Saturday night. In the other NFC game next weekend, the No. 1 seed Carolina Panthers will host the wild-card Seattle Seahawks on Sunday.

In Landover, Md.

PACKERS	REDSKINS
35	18

With the Packers and Seahawks joining the AFC's Pittsburgh Steelers and Kansas City Chiefs, it's the first time road teams went 4-0 in the wild-card round under the current NFL playoff format, which started in 1990.

Washington (9-8) had won four games in a row, but its season ends without a single victory over a team that finished with a winning record.

Rodgers finished 21 for 36 for 210 yards and no interceptions. Washington QB Kirk Cousins, making his first career playoff start after a breakthrough season, was 29 for 46 for 329 yards. He threw for one touchdown, lost one fumble and was sacked six times.

Here is how effective Green Bay was against a Washington defence that had developed a bend-but-don't-break-reputation: The Packers scored on five consecutive possessions in one stretch, with four touchdowns and a field goal.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Ovi completes race to 500 against Sens

Alex Ovechkin GETTY IMAGES

Alex Ovechkin scored his 500th and 501st goals to become the 43rd NHL player to reach the milestone and the Washington Capitals beat the Ottawa Senators 7-1 on Sunday night.

Ovechkin reached the mark in vintage fashion, scoring from just beyond the left hash marks during a second-period power play to give the Capitals a 5-1 lead.

Teammates mobbed Ovechkin, and he got an extended standing ovation and took a skate around the rink, acknowledging the cheering crowd that included his parents. He added No. 501 midway through third.

At 801 games, the Russian winger is the fifth-fastest player to 500 goals, trailing only Hall of Famers Wayne Gretzky (575 games), Mario Lemieux (605), Mike Bossy (647) and Brett Hull (693).

Ovechkin has filled the net more often than anyone since he entered the league in 2005, scoring 149 more goals than the next closest player, Jarome Iginla.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Spieth brings last year's form into 2016 with victory

Jordan Spieth brought his old form to the new year and had no trouble winning the Hyundai Tournament of Champions on Sunday.

Staked to a five-shot lead, Spieth made two straight birdies around the turn at Kapalua to restore his margin, and he spent the rest of the afternoon soaking up the views of surf and sun on Maui.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Giants deal prospect to Kootenay on deadline day

The Vancouver Giants made one deal on the WHL's trade deadline day.

The Giants sent prospect forward Kaeden Taphorn to the Kootenay Ice in exchange for a second-round pick in the 2016 Bantam Draft. The Giants return home from a five-game road trip with four wins, including an overtime victory in Red Deer on Saturday.

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RECIPE Kale, Spinach and Rice Cakes

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Take leftover rice and transform into these health-packed cakes that are a perfect, light dinner with eggs.

Ready in
Prep time: 30 minutes
Serves 2

Ingredients
- 1 cup chopped spinach
- 1 cup chopped kale
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup cooked Arborio rice
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese

Directions
1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Lightly grease a muffin pan.
2. In a small pan, melt butter over medium heat. Add garlic and onion and sauté for 2 minutes, until onions are translucent.
3. Place spinach, kale and butter mixture into food processor. Pulse until finely chopped. Transfer to a medium-sized bowl.
4. Add rice, eggs and cheese into bowl. Stir until combined.
5. Pour mixture into prepared muffin tin, leaving about 1 inch at the top. Bake for 20 minutes, or until set and edges are golden brown. Loosen edges with a knife and turn onto a plate. Serve warm with your favourite eggs.

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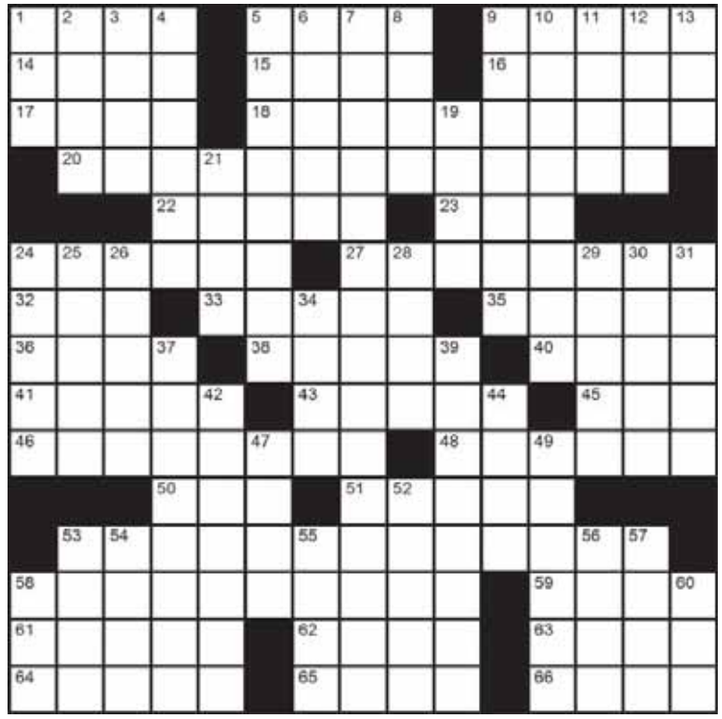
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Thundering sound
5. Moonfish
9. Beach Boys: "_ John B"
14. Golfer's "Watch out!"
15. Exasperate
16. Mrs. Flintstone
17. _ _ bit of light in (Tilt the blinds)
18. One who tolls from the steeple: 2 wds.
20. Canadian author of the bestseller at #53-Across: 2 wds.
22. Paint kind
23. "_ Buttermilk Sky
24. Dog-starring adventure series
27. Canadian legend Oscar of jazz
32. Blake Shelton's Oklahoma hometown
33. Deep _ (Restaurant appliance)
35. New _, India
36. Beaks
38. Mister: Spanish
40. Canadian jazz vocalist Matt
41. Latin for 'fault'
43. Valuable holding
45. Ms. West
46. Athlete's activity
48. Horror flick of 1932 that Dracula would enjoy
50. Mr. Somerhalder
51. :)
53. CBC's set-in-19th-century-Newfoundland miniseries of 2002 based on #20-Across' same-named novel: 2 wds.
58. When a goal is expected to be reached: 2 wds.
59. Flatbread variety
61. Blu Cantrell's "_ '_ Up Style (Oops!)"
62. Challenger
63. Poet Mr. Pound
64. Having a single component
65. Nuptials exchanges: 2 wds.
66. Dog's "Hey, that hurts!"

DOWN
1. Spiral-shaped light bulb, commonly
2. Tunesmith Lisa
3. Puccini aria: "Vissi d'_"
4. Classic necklaces
5. Satellites in movement
6. Art object
7. Like a trip won on a game show: 3 wds.
8. Sea captain's spot
9. Stylishly added the soft ice cream to the cone
10. Remained, as the scent of perfume
11. Gymnast Ms. Korbut
12. Harbinger
13. Golf standard
19. Tooth part
21. Newbie
24. Charging knight's weapon
25. Folie _ _ (Foolishness shared by two)
26. Canada's wild horses island
28. Ancient love god
29. Fall/decline
30. Lana Del Rey's "_ _ Can You See"
31. One manufacturing apparel for the swoosh logo sports brand, say
34. Positive votes
37. English _ Spaniel (Sporting dog breed)
39. Those making edits
42. Steve Guttenberg comedy, "Police _" (1984)
44. Mr. Bachman's
47. "How could _ _?" (It was hard to refuse)
49. Irish actor Colm who starred in #53-Across
52. San _ (California city)
53. Puddle creator
54. "Thou _ _ lady." - King Lear
55. Gladiator's 1506
56. Fixed stare
57. British peer
58. Three days after Monday, wee-ly
60. Catch a wink

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
Good things and good people will come into your life this week. You're so popular that your name is at the top of everyone's guest list. Your only problem is going to be finding the time to keep your admirers happy.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
If you've been thinking about changing direction in your career now is the time to start making some serious moves. All options are open to you, it's just a question of choosing the right one.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You're the flavour of the month. Don't hesitate to take advantage of people's good feelings toward you. Travel will broaden your horizons.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Take full advantage of the favourable position you'll find yourself in today. Don't miss out because you think it would be wrong to do well for yourself while others are struggling.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
If a friend or family member says something critical don't think they're trying to put you down. More likely they're trying to make you aware of the mistakes you've been making so you won't make them again.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You'll always reap what you sow, and if recent efforts are anything to go by that means you have a great deal to look forward to. Sit back and enjoy the good things heading your way.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
The planets are not only boosting your creativity but also your confidence. Find ways to help loved ones who are not feeling as good about life as you are. With your assistance they will soon be smiling again.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You will find it easy to show affection today, even if you are the kind of Scorpio who prefers to keep your feelings to themselves. Let loved ones know you still care for them.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Others will find out soon enough what your opinions are so you might as well come clean now. And if they don't match what most people believe? Then most people are wrong.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Ignore those who say you have been lucky and don't deserve it. They're just jealous that they have to work so hard while everything seems to come easy to you. Yes, life can be unfair at times, but that's how it is.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Try not to be so intense. Rest assured that everything that is meant to happen will happen when the time is right. Relax and let life come to you.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
There's so much to be thankful for and yet you seem determined to focus on the very few things that have gone wrong. It's time to lighten up a little and let your heart guide you. You will be happier for it.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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FRIDAY'S ANSWERS

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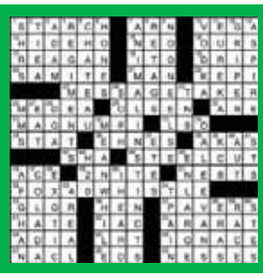

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